



Course Evaluation Report: Developing Media for Interpretive Centers

Harpers Ferry Center and the NPS Intermountain Region
NPS Headquarters, Lakewood, CO
July 26-29, 2004



In collaboration with the NPS Intermountain Regional Office, Harpers Ferry Center presented “Developing Media for Interpretive Centers” in Lakewood, CO, in the summer of 2005. The three-and-a-half day course offered park managers and interpreters an overview of exhibit and AV development processes for park and interagency interpretive centers.

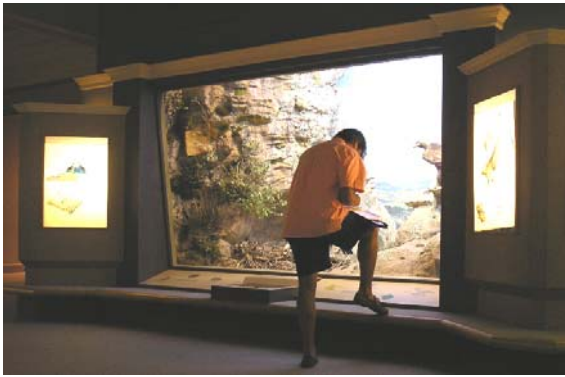
Harpers Ferry Center Director Gary Candelaria (left) and Denver Service Center Director Dan Wenk explain how the service centers collaborate on media and facilities design. The Region’s new training room provided the setting for collaborative learning among service center media staff and park-based interpreters and media specialists.

HFC’s Interpretive Media Institute and the Intermountain Region Office of Interpretation designed the course to assist field staff in managing interpretive media projects related to park facilities such as visitor centers, museums, nature centers, and contact stations. Participants learned the steps involved in developing exhibits, wayside exhibits, museum displays, video presentations, and historic furnishings exhibits. They also received training in media related tasks involving funding, cost estimating, contracting, project agreements, and project strategizing.

Instructors used HFC’s Media Development Process diagram, called the “Media Wheel,” throughout the course to help clarify phases of development.

Participants in previous IMI courses suggested that more examples would aid comprehension of the complex processes at work in media development. On the first day of the course, project managers from four Intermountain parks presented case studies of their interpretive center projects, illustrating the successes and the pitfalls. On the last day,

HFC instructors presented the lessons learned from the recently completed interpretive center project at Manzanar National Historic Site.



Evaluating the "Explore Colorado" exhibit at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science

In addition to consideration of NPS projects, the class made a late afternoon trip to the Denver Museum of Nature & Science where they conducted a review of the "Explore Colorado" exhibit featuring impressive dioramas of Colorado life zones. The visit included a talk by the museum's project manager, and a small-group discussion of the quality factors present in the exhibits based on criteria provided by the class instructors. Participants looked for strengths and weaknesses in categories such as museum lighting, accessibility, and writing.

The course addressed elements of the curriculum for the following NPS core interpretive competencies: IDP Module 310, Planning Park Interpretation, and Module 311, Interpretive Media Development. Instructors included Interpretive Development Program certifiers.

The overall course evaluation rating of 4.6 on a scale of 5.0 showed a positive response to the course. This report includes a detailed rating chart and complete written comments. The standard NPS training evaluation form was used.

Course Objectives

- Learn how to manage a media project in collaboration with contractors, HFC, and/or DSC.
- Learn the key principles for successful media projects.
- Understand basic media development processes.
- Define a media project strategy.
- Become familiar with NPS media standards and guidelines.
- Know the resources for cost estimating, funding, and programming for media projects.
- Learn how to effectively utilize HFC as a consulting partner on projects.

Course Guidelines

- Dialog between course staff and participants will be encouraged.
- The media information HFC will be providing will apply to all park media work, not just projects to be planned or produced by HFC.
- Course content will incorporate principles of the Interpretive Development Program.
- The course will look at media development in an integrated manner, demonstrating the interdependence of exhibits, AV, and other media including architectural design considerations.
- Content will be tailored to the needs of park managers and park project managers.
- Instructors will use case studies to illustrate media processes.

Course Participants and Staff

The thirty-two (32) participants included NPS or partner employees who currently—or soon will be—managing development of interpretive media projects. Six media specialists from Harpers Ferry Center served as instructors in planning, design, and production in diverse media fields. Intermountain Region and Denver Service Center staff offered sessions covering planning, budgeting, and facilities design.

Participants

Ruben Andrade, Fort Union NM
Anita Badertscher, Tumacacori NM
Colleen Bathe, Bryce Canyon NP
Joanie Budzileni, San Juan NHS-PR
Lyn Carranza, Petrified Forest NP
Melissa Cobern, Golden Spike NHS
Christine Czazasty, Devils Tower NM
Jacolyn Daniluck, Parks Canada
David Elkowitz, Big Bend NP
Matt Fagan, Big Thicket NP
Kimberly Finch, Grand Teton NP
Melanie Florez, Saguaro NP
Kym Hall, Coronado NMem
Rick Jones, HFC-Denver
Ann Kyle, Maryland Office of Tourism
Hallie Larsen, Petrified Forest NP
Derek Lohuis, Channel Islands NP
Rose Manibusan, War in the Pacific NHP
Chuck Milliken, Natl Trails System-SLC
Todd Overbye, Hovenweep NM
Judy Rosen, Rocky Mountain NP
Andrea Sharon, Natl Trails System Office
Tessy Shirakawa, Mesa Verde NP
Michele Simmons, Sitka NHP
Diane Souder, Petroglyph NM
Jim Staebler, Bighorn Canyon NRA
Frank Torres, Coronado NMem
Alan Van Valkenburg, Death Valley NP
Mark Wagner, Glacier NP
Rick Wallner, Bent's Old Fort NHS
Rick Wilson, Florissant Fossil Beds NM
Jeff Wolin, Florissant Fossil Beds NM

Course Sponsors

Neil DeJong, Chief of Interpretation, IMR
Becky Debs, Lead, Construction Group, IMR
Kate Cannon, Acting Deputy Reg. Dir., IMR
Gary Candelaria, Director, HFC

Course Coordinators

Judy Chetwin, IMR
David Guiney, HFC

Course Instructors and Presenters

Carol Bennetts, IMR
Gary Candelaria, HFC
Chris Dearing, HFC
Becky Debs, IMR
Leslie DuBey, Big Thicket NP
Eric Epstein, HFC
Sue Fischer, Sunset Crater Volcano NM
David Guiney, HFC
Richard Kohen, IMR
Al Levitan, HFC
PJ Lewis, HFC
Linda Lutz-Ryan, IMR
Ed Nieto, DSC
Justin Radford, HFC
Carol Sperling, Great Sand Dunes NM
Sam Vaughn, HFC
Dan Wenk, DSC
Phil Zichter, Black Canyon of the
Gunnison NP and Currecanti NRA

Course Notebooks and Logistics

Robin Butler, HFC
Diana Jackson-Charlino, HFC
Lauren Morrison, HFC

Standard NPS Evaluation Ratings

The highest possible value for each answer is 5.0

Course Name: **"Developing Media for Interpretive Centers"**

NPS Intermountain Region

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Question and average rating	5	4	3	2	1
Overall, course objectives were met. 4.6	(17) 85	(13) 52	—	—	—
I came to this training event expecting to work toward specific competencies. 4.1	(15) 75	(7) 28	(7) 21	(2) 4	—
I was highly satisfied with the overall training, considering my original expectations. 4.4	(15) 75	(13) 52	(2) 6	—	—
The training directly related to the duties of my position. 4.8	(27) 135	(3) 12	(1) 3	—	—
The sessions in this program were presented in a logical sequence. 4.7	(22) 110	(7) 28	(2) 6	—	—
What I learned in this training will help me immediately in my job when I return. 4.7	(23) 115	(5) 20	(3) 9	—	—
What I learned in this training will be put to use in the next six months. 4.8	(25) 125	(5) 20	(1) 3	—	—
The course coordinator was effective. 4.8	(26) 130	(4) 16	(1) 3	—	—
The meeting room provided a good learning environment. 4.7	(23) 115	(6) 24	(1) 3	(1) 2	—
The facilities were suitable. 4.7	(22) 110	(8) 32	(1) 3	—	—

The overall course rating for all ten questions for all respondents is **4.6**.

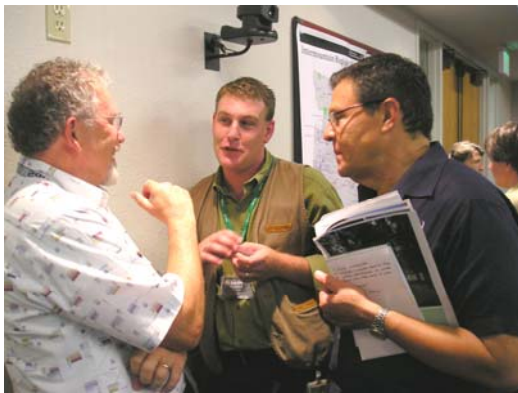
Written Comments

What were the strong points of the course?

- Seeing HFC/DSC team members all “on the same page” and having them here for one-on-one time.
- Knowing that HFC & DSC are enthusiastic about the whole IDP process.
- Telling us CD would be burned (and doing so) helped keep the angst down the whole week.
- Presentations done w/humor and humility really made them interesting and valuable.
- Going in order of the [Media] wheel
- Case studies
- Course book
- Networking opportunities
- Meeting people face-to-face
- Sharing personal experiences, interaction w/participants and facilitators
- Presentations that had a lot of group participation were best.
- Field trip to museum was very helpful, and I look at exhibits a bit differently.
- 3 ½ days good, perhaps make it 4 but not 5
- The entire week was well-organized, well-paced and directly relevant and useful to upcoming projects.
- I think I will find the information and binder –which demystified the media development process – to be practical, usable guides that will be referred to again and again. The opportunity to interact with a variety of HFC staff was a wonderful way to understand the different specialties and to put a human face on HFC.
- The expertise of the instructors was mind blowing! These guys/gals know their stuff!!! thank you...
- Examples were relevant
- Manzanar example was fabulous!
- Well organized, logical sequence, covered lots of information, kept moving and on time – thanks! Liked the 3 ½ day format.
- Good examples
- Excellent instructor experience/knowledge
- Contracting issues especially relevant
- Wide range of topics covered
- Having all the HFC experts here to tell us what they know and to answer our individual questions!!



- Good “take home” items — liked the CD. I liked the session on the number of different ways to accomplish a VC project.
- Coordination of event was great!!
- Very well organized and moved right along
- Good case studies and examples
- Nice to have refreshments!
- Professional presenters and presentations
- Fast paced sessions that provide good overviews and places to get further information – this is the way to go versus long sessions with too much detail that won’t be remembered anyway.
- Lots of “how to” information
- Morning (7:30a) sessions very worthwhile
- The session in which the park personnel presented their projects and provided tips – this was extremely valuable to show real world examples of media work.
- It was good to hear from all the HFC people and their expertise
- HFC offer of forming design team was great
- [Carol] Sperling’s talk was particularly pertinent to my upcoming situation and the ensuing contact will likely be worth the whole week spent here. The others also pointed out many things to watch for.

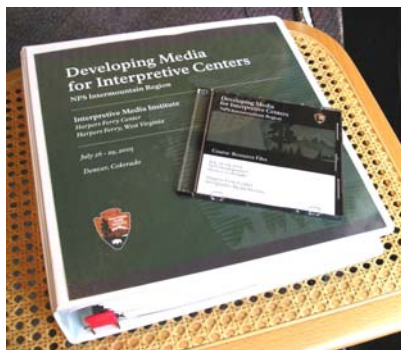


- The multitude of ideas will lead to expanded areas of consideration in areas of limited personal experience.
 - Well organized, in-depth info
 - Presenters did a thorough job of delivering information effectively
 - Timing for having the course was ideal for the needs of our park
 - Facilitators were very knowledgeable on their subject matter
- Judy C. [Chetwin] did a good job keeping with the scheduled times, difficult to do
 - Nicely ventilated and spacious facility
 - Extremely well-organized
 - Great resources and lots of relevant information that applies to beginners and more experienced people – well organized. 3 ½ days was perfect. 3 days would be the minimum time for this class. This was one of the best trainings I have attended (most useful). Judy Chetwin did a great job facilitating. The resource binder was excellent and obviously took a lot of work.
 - Fast pace; enthusiastic and knowledgeable instructors; excellent overview of most aspects of media development – but did not get bogged down or boring (thanks)

- Comfortable and roomy training room
- The knowledge of the instructors was excellent. They were very helpful and wanted to make sure everybody understood what they were talking about.
- So much help from all the course leaders, so much enthusiasm. Well coordinated, responsive, so much information.



- The wealth of knowledge that the instructors have to share is amazing. It is great to see the faces of these I have been working w/via telephone
- David Guiney – great facilitator/instructor
- The binder and CD – we are to receive – Great Reference Sources...thank you very much.
- I thank you HFC for taking the time out of your busy schedules to put this on – it should be mandatory for chiefs involved in major exhibit and VC planning
- Good order, strong speakers with lots of knowledge. Relevant case studies are helpful. Kept on track. Great field trip. Tons of ideas and great interchange. Rarely could a speaker not answer questions. That was refreshing. Encouraged good interaction between instructors and participants and between participants.
- Excellent presenters – well organized and knowledgeable
- Great to have so many HFC representatives



- Excellent answers
- Hoping that the CD to follow will be very useful
- Provides a foundation in understanding the process of developing large media projects, while brief – provided a place/contact number etc. go for more information
- The CD and notebook are great resources to have!!
- Notebooks – resources will be most valuable in the future
- The various presenters were extremely knowledgeable and willing to assist us with any dilemmas
- The sessions were well paced and kept pretty much to the schedule
- Lots of great information!!
- Well organized, rich content, skilled instructors, excellent logistics and clear opportunities for applications
- Expertise of course instructors
- Availability of instructors before, in between, and after sessions to answer questions, and discuss individual projects

- Comprehensive course content from all aspects of planning to production
- Provision of resources to follow through and learn more
- (IMR, DSC support)
- Getting to meet and hear directly from HFC's media specialists
- The case studies were very helpful. Hearing field interpreters' tales of successful projects and how things went wrong was more effective than brief instructions from the HFC folk.
- HFC experts here – it was like hearing personal consultation on call
- Video/AV systems – concept of being able to just do a “treatment” and see how it goes...process... process... process
- Interaction between instructors and class as well as within the class
- Field trip was great—wished we had more time!!

What were the weak points of the course and how would you change them for the better?

- Air conditioning was too cold in meeting room!
- Soda machine ran out of 20 oz. Diet Coke....
- Session of fabrication/budget got way too detailed... just back off a little.
- Less info on legalities/contracts? A bit much, a bit confusing. Time better spent on...more extensive info steps to organize your media projects. (maybe group projects, individual assignment write ups...?)
- Any possibilities for more group break at sessions or group work?
- A hands-on week long activity? “This week we’ll begin to plan out a real exhibit for XYZ park...each group take a different aspect and offers ideas.
- I would like the opportunity to see more finished products – especially AV productions. Perhaps an optional evening session? The cases studies presented on exhibit design were very helpful – would have been nice to have the same treatment for AV.
- More photos of projects from cradle to grave (Manzanar – example) so we can compare to the scope of work and decision/plan process. Did you get what you expected from S.O.W.
- A bit more time to socialize and network during the day – longer lunch
- Probably need a full week or at least one more day so that there is more time for questions of each presenter. Much more could be covered that is directly applicable.
- Why were there not more superintendents here?
- Can a session be developed for superintendents so that they will have an understanding of how much time (employee, planning, production, etc.) is involved in this process?
- With this experienced group, may be less time on CIP, LRIP ----just introduce to use these in planning or have this as a pre-class handout
- Cold classroom

- There was an overwhelming amount of information in the notebook and presentations. Don't know if you could extend the course any longer – just a matter of streamlining things a bit.
- Some of the lists of procedures seemed hard to relate to....though I suppose as one gets into the process in depth they will become very relevant.
- Given the tremendous amount of information and interest in this course, we may want to consider adding an additional day so as not to “cram” some important useful information towards the end of the day
- I feel that superintendents should be required to attend this course, given the magnitude
- Too much text on some PowerPoints —use larger fonts on some PowerPoints—more variety of case studies from different parks. Primary study repeated was Selma to Montgomery – repeated too much. Make last 2 discussion sessions optional for people who have long travel times - end at 11:00 am . 1st 2 days ended 20-30 minutes later than scheduled. Wednesday was supposed to end @ 4:15pm. This is too much to go overtime based on expectations from schedule.
- This was a survey course, great stuff and I need more details on certain areas, especially writing RFPs and collecting information for them. Would like a list of related courses, that treat some things in more detail. Also cost estimating and square footage estimates and doing the building construction part.
- Need more time for evaluation w/group – I did review of exhibit design – the reason we are here and did not have enough time to share my notes – open discussion wasn't given opportunity not enough time again – didn't raise hand high enough..
- The AV technical problems during presentations – surprised this would happen w/our finest....
- Not enough time spent on PMIS formulation of project requests. This is critical information for folks who must provide guidance or draft project requests and have minimal experience. Supporting media (waysides, web, etc.) needed more time as well. Some info on contracts and estimating seemed duplicative and could have been reduced.
- Would like to have seen a “little” more time spent on other media types also – especially waysides and publications
- Would like to recommend 4 full days to cover additional media types
- No real weak points
- A lot of information! Was a little overwhelming.
- Too much information in such a short span of time, hard to grasp it all!
- Lecture after lunch in a dark room
- Pace was fast for complex material
- Not enough case studies, personal experience time – somewhat limited for alternative methods
- Could use a bit more interactivity during some of the lectures
- None
- Room chilly!!

- Needed to mention @ beginning of course possibilities esp. meals so we can network better after hours
- Perhaps conduct in-depth training on specific subject, i.e. "Exhibit Planner" software application, AV/films, museum collection/conservation
- I would like to have seen more exhibits first-hand at local museums and have them critiqued by the HFC. Our one field trip seemed a bit directionless once we got there.
- Because most of the class was about designing interpretive centers as an entity, the choice of exhibit at the museum was odd. It was based on pre-existing, historic dioramas and then adapted. That idea of adapting and integrating exhibits was not really covered in the training sessions.
- I think the museum was ok/fun but time might have been better spent in class
- More on "accessibility" and creative ways to do universal design
- Too much information, too little time! Perhaps Pt. 1 and Pt. II courses to follow-up to the overview

How will you apply the information and/or demonstrate the skill as a result of this training?

- I have \$ [dollars] for a series of waysides and I am definitely buying the software so I don't drive myself crazy.
- I never even considered putting (our new) exhibits in PMIS *now* for rehab down the road. Good idea...
- Where to begin??? – new VC exhibits 2008/2009,— communicating more clearly this process with new superintendent and staff, — waysides, everything....



- I know who to call
- I am better prepared to meet w/superintendent and go thru project steps and requirements w/him
- Will be using this info to design and plan projects.
- Will be crucial and invaluable to deciding whether and to what extent to involve HFC vs. going it alone. I'll definitely feel more comfortable and likely to call HFC for advice and guidance, resulting in smoother and higher quality, more cost and time effective projects.
- Will apply what I have learned to my S.O.W.
- I am now a more informed client, contractors will be held accountable when they do not deliver what is promised
- I will make more informed decisions in the planning process
- New VC exhibits
- I will be sending out proposals to 3 IDIQ contractors shortly. This course will help me to renew my SOW, administer the contract and get a better VC project.

- We are in the midst of a total re-do of our museum — it will be extremely helpful. Also, I made contacts which will immediately help me move forward on several aspects of my job.
- There are a number of large (and small) interpretive projects
- Upcoming exhibit projects
- Immediate work on an exhibit project
- Immediate planning for putting out RFP for planning and design on VC exhibit project
- It will be very helpful as I work on media projects in my park such as new park orientation video and a planned interpretive wayside plaza
- Preparing 5 exhibits in the next 2-3 years, many points presented will be departure points for further consideration
- I am working on an interpretive media project where I will use information from this training
- I will definitely apply the information acquired and make use of the appropriate contacts to effectively plan and carry through our project of expanding our VC and exhibitry
- Working on VC planning right now – excellent background for how the process works
- Be a much more informed and knowledgeable participant in the planning team, and take a comfortable lead in the media development aspect
- I am developing several visitor centers immediately
- Wow! I will work w/IMR staff to do a charrette for a wayside project and I know where I can get assistance for other projects
- Reference constantly binder info as we dive into our exhibit work
- We are to immediately begin formulating a project request for a full renovation of our VC. This class will help me plan more effectively, know my resources, spur ideas and creativity. It will also help me to understand how long and how involved the process is. Helped me to think about pitfalls to avoid.
- I work with all elements that were covered on a daily basis and therefore would like to have seen a little more time on other media types
- All information will be utilized to develop current projects and future projects – waysides, publications, interpretive centers and exhibits
- Currently in the middle of two media projects and have a contract out for bid for a third project
- I will begin work on a single visitor center exhibit that I have assigned to develop. I now know people I can contact for assistance
- Assist park in design/production of media projects
- I will begin applying all I learned to PRE-PLANNING until project comes on board;
- I will present alternate strategies on how to approach projects; and develop interpretive schedule to dovetail w/A&E project schedule
- Immediate formative evaluation will be brought into 2 new planned exhibits

- I'll go back and do annual interpretive plan ASAP. I'll draft scope of work for treatment and call up HFC for ex.
- I might even submit items toward competency
- A primary duty of mine is exhibit development

Other comments

- Examples & knowledge of available software to make our jobs easier is incredibly valuable (i.e. I don't have to start from ground zero!)
- Can we get access to more computers/phones?



- This is one of the best training sessions I've ever attended. I would recommend it to all who play important roles in media development. Fantastic – keep them going!
- I thought the 3 ½ day format was just great – just right
- It would have been nice to have an extra 15 minutes for lunch. One hour and fifteen minutes would be perfect; this would allow for the time needed to walk to restaurants; in addition, it would give those few extra minutes needed to “network”. I found the experiences shared over a meal were invaluable. Perhaps a “coffee-table” style discussion group (that rotates) would be a valuable hour. A place where we can share project success/failures in a more intimate setting.
- Thank you for the great cookies
- Thank you...thank you...thank you for this amazing opportunity.
- Excellent, excellent course. Thanks so much for putting this together. I can't image doing a large media project without this training!
- Thanks for a good, useful training

- I thought the length of the class was just right. Most sessions were about the right (sorry I can't write today!) length. I would have liked longer breaks – we had to hike out to get cell phone reception, wait turns for the computers...it was hard to fit in necessary business and take bathroom breaks without missing class time.
- Overall, an excellent, relevant, practical class.
- Thanks!
- Great having HFC staff here....face to face was very valuable.
- Great opportunity
- Wish I had it [this training] before working on a new VC
- Length is perfect, especially during a busy part of the year
- Thank you for all your work on a very helpful course
- Presenters were all good – though expect that at this level
- Go Judy! [Chetwin]
- Course could be 4 ½ days
- Length of class is just right
- I was very pleased with the entire planning and objectives of this course. The information provided was very informative.
- [The training] will tie in nicely with the waysides I need to do for the park
- Include more variety of case studies across the region or nation. Don't repeat the same case study more than twice. Case studies on Day 1 in afternoon (last session) were really engaging, and [it was] valuable to see real-life examples and troubleshooting.
- Length of course – appropriate and allows for travel time
- AMAZING COURSE!!!!
- Too short – would like more open discussions with participants on things that can go wrong
- Would have liked to hear background of participants and what projects they have – will be working on –Intro to networking/making connections
- Remember – you have participants not w/NPS or within your region – watch NPS acronyms - explain NPS programs briefly (PMIS) for their benefit
- Excellent facility. Good A/V and lots of room to use during the sessions. Nice not to be crammed together.
- Loved the agenda, explanations with each session and order of sessions is excellent.
- Good length of course, and the field trip is a perfect way to break up the course and apply what's been learned.
- Glad you selected the Sheraton, excellent lodging.
- Wish I had this training several years ago
- Suggestion: Have a 2-hour period when HFC/DSC experts are available at separate tables for us to circulate to and ask park-specific questions. I didn't want to take up

valuable time with my questions, but would have liked to talk to 2-3 of our professional media staff

- Excellent course and instructors
- Need more of these!!!!
- The conference room overhead lighting was very tiring on the eyes
- Because most of the participants were staying at the Sheraton, it might have been easier to rent a conference room there so we didn't have to go through the hassle of getting a ride back and forth.
- I really learned a lot from the presenters as well as fellow class members
- Thanks to all who coordinated and to the Line Item [Program, IMR] \$ for funding
- Maybe send out a 6-month questionnaire – I bet you'd find at least 90% used something from this class.
- Timing was good – for travel to/from
- I had a great time! Thank you!
- Thank you Judy, IMR, DSC and HFC staff – all did a tremendous job. Whatever questions I leave with, I feel confident (w/contacts and resources provided) I have resources to successfully complete future projects.

August 26, 2005

IMR Course Eval.doc/pdf

Author: David Guiney, Robin Butler, and course participants

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